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The winningest hybridizer of all time was Harry Goulding with six HOTY winners (Lovely Rea, Yellow Indian, Lady Adele, Funny Smoke, Great Satan, Green Hornet), the last one awarded posthumously in 1994. Close on his heels is the Conrad Family with Dawn Conrad winning three (Willie Nelson, Amber Suzanne, Erika Nicole), and Pete and Jo Conrad winning two (Capistrano and Royal Treasure). Only one hybridizer captured a hat trick with all three top honors in the same year: Gordon Howard in 1989 won HOTY and second and third places with Fifth Dimension, Lora Patrice and Gray Mule, respectively.

Of the 35 HOTY winners, we still grow 13. There are 15 that we have grown in the past, but no longer have in our collection, and seven that we have never seen.

Here are three "oldies" that we still grow, and at the end of this column is a list of a dozen Hibiscus of the Year winners that have been featured in Texas Bloomers, with issue references:

Charles Schmidt – was named Hibiscus of the Year in 1985, beating out Lucy and King David. Hybridized by Carl Wilbanks from unknown parentage, this bright bloom will grab your attention. A 7" fully overlapped single, this very ruffled bloom begins with a two-toned bubble gum pink center and zone. Next come a light orange body with a wide border of gold and yellow in a splotched pattern. Very eye-catching.

Lady Adele – hybridized by Harry Goulding from Grey Lady x Romeo was Hibiscus of the Year in 1983, besting Susan Bogaert and Mr. Brett. Purportedly named for then-Florida-governor Bob Graham's wife, Adele, this smallish loose double bloom is very ruffled and tufted. A large dark burgundy eye bleeds into a lighter burgundy starburst extension that is bordered by a medium lavender zone. The body color is light lavender with touches of white at the petals' edges. Not a heavy bloomer in our heat but it is a good one to keep around for hybridizing.

Herm Geller – was once touted to me as the best hibiscus ever hybridized. I'm not so sure about that claim, but it is a fine bloom for those who like brown flowers. Hibiscus of The Year in 1988 and bred by Joe Ludick from Topaz Glory x Joyce A, this 8" single is very crepey, some might say wrinkled. The very dark brownish-maroon center, with the slightest hint of white veining, shows off the pale tan body and light gold/yellow edge. Use this one in your hybridizing program to produce outstanding eyes.
Read about these Hibiscus of the Year winners in these issues of The Seed Pod:

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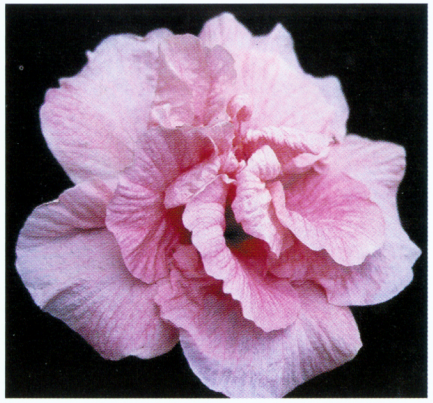
Featured Blooms

All Aglow



Betsy

Blooming Blazes

Cele Niffenegger

Charles Schmidt

Susan Bogaert